

## Constantine and me

Religion was, therefore, entirely rehabilitated and the validity of the consecration of Gaudianus was unimpaired.

Then follows the Council of Aries in 314. With a forbearance rarely displayed by a Roman emperor to inveterate and unreasoning opposition, Constantine yielded to the clamour of the Donatists for a new council on a broader and more authoritative scale than the omission of Italian and Gallic bishops. But little disappointment and disgust are plainly to be seen in his letter to the proconsul of Africa. Constantine began by saying that he had fully expected that the decision of a commission of bishops "of the very highest probity and competence" would have commanded universal respect, but he found, however, that the enemies of Cyprianus were as obstinate as ever, for they declared that the bishops had simply shut themselves up in a room and judged the case according to their personal predilections, they clamoured for another council: he would appoint one which was to meet at Aries. Valerianus, thereupon, was to see that the public posting service throughout Africa and Mauritania was placed at the disposal of Cyprianus and his party and of Donatus; and his party, that they might travel with despatch and cross into Spain by the quickest passage. Then the letter continued:

"You will provide each separate Bishop with letters entitling him to necessaries *in via* (*tantummodo* *in* *terras*) that he may arrive at Aries by the shortest of routes, and you will also give all the bishops to understand that, before they leave their dioceses, they tint it